AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH WORK

"A STUDY OF GRICEAN MAXIMS WITH REFERENCE TO SAMUAL BECKETT'S SELECTED PLAYS"

SYNOPSIS
SUBMITTED TO
SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY,
NANADED

FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH
UNDER THE FACULTY OF ARTS

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2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term 'Absurd' applies to certain European and American dramatists belonging to the period of 1950s and early 1960s who were not a part of any self proclaimed movement but who held in common the sense of metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of human condition. The notion of 'Absurd' became topical largely because of Albert Camus' essay entitled 'The Myth of Sisyphus' (1942). The term 'Absurd' is especially associated with drama. The study of contemporary drama, under the title 'The Theatre of the Absurd' by Martin Esslin, published in 1961, surveys the writings of Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov, Jean Genet and some other leading playwrights. The main thesis of these dramatists is that, human life being without 'meaning' or 'coherence' is essentially chaotic; consequently, human beings have no channel of 'meaningful' communication. These plays aim at giving a genuine reflection of life through a medium which suggests a full range of absurdity, such as meaninglessness, nonsense, non-communication and so on. In fact, the genuine display of absurdity is effectively exposed through various communicative activities, which are explicitly felt eccentric. In addition, conversation in the absurd plays is different from the usual dramatic conversation. Consequently, communicative activities in the absurd drama being chaotic are difficult to comprehend. Therefore, application of Pragmatics to the absurd plays may help the readers to derive the intended meaning out of seemingly cooperative or uncooperative utterances.

Pragmatics, term proposed by Charles Morris (Levinson: 1983), is the study of relations of verbal signs to interpreters. The definition of Pragmatics can be cited as below.

"Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in structure of a language".[1] *(*Levinson: 1983:9)

Pragmatics, as a theory, seeks to characterize how speakers use the words, phrases and sentences for an effective and successful communication. In a sense, the ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called Pragmatic Competence. The relationship between language and context is studied by Pragmatics. Language gains meaning from context. Pragmatics studies how utterances have different meanings in diverse contexts and situations. There are verities of communicative strategies which can be identified in absurd plays. At this juncture, the Gricean Maxims may help at a great deal to understand and comprehend the absurd drama, especially Beckett's play in a far better way.

2. SUBJECT MATTER

There have been several studies of Gricean Maxims in naturally occurring dialogues and conversations but there has been no study of observance and violation of the Grice's the Co-operative Principle in Samuel Beckett's plays. The researcher has selected Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot (1953), The Endgame (1957), Happy Days (1958) and Krapp's Last Tape (1961).* Grice's Co-operative Principle and his four maxims are powerful tools to deal with discourse and text. Grice defines Co-operative Principle (CP) as follows,

"Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged". (1975:47)[2]

Grice's (1975) theory, in which he develops the Co-operative Principle, is essentially a theory about how people use language in the schemata. Grice's suggestion is that there is a set of overarching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. He has identified, as guidelines, four basic maxims of conversation:

- The Maxim of Quality:

  1) Do not say what you believe to be false;
  2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

- The Maxim of Quantity:

  1) Make your contribution as informative as required;
  2) Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

- The Maxim of Relevance:

  Make your contribution relevant.

- The Maxim of Manner:

  Be perspicuous, and specifically;

  1) avoid obscurity
  2) avoid ambiguity

These maxims are generally observed by the interlocutors, however many times, due to intentionality, they are violated. Let's cite an example from *Waiting for Godot* to make it clearer.

After telling Estragon to put on his trousers, which are still around his ankles since the cord that held up his trousers is now broken, Vladimir suggests that they leave:

VLADIMIR: Well? Shall we go?

ESTRAGON: Yes, let's go.

They do not move.

The ending of Act II is exactly the same as was the ending of Act I, and we have one final example of the inequality between the characters' words and the characters' actions. And since both acts are so identical and so circular, it should be obvious that tomorrow will find the two tramps back at the same place waiting for Godot, who will not come but who will send a boy messenger to tell them that Godot will surely come tomorrow and they must come back to wait for Godot, etc.

Hence, with the disparity between their words and deeds, both Vladimir and Estragon violates the maxim of relevance. However, as Estragon is seen in agreement with Vladimir, he can be observed as observing the maxim of manner and relevance alone.

This study is entitled as "Analysis of Gricean Maxims With Reference To Samuel Beckett's Selected Plays" will be studied and analyzed in the light of Grice's The Co-operative Principle. This will be probably the first intensive study of Co-operative principle with reference to Samuel Beckett's selected plays. It will examine Samuel Beckett as a distinguished absurd writer and various communicative strategies in his plays.

3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is a fundamental assumption that in talk exchanges there is a certain agreement between the speaker and the listener while communicating. Grice's (1989) theory is based on this agreement in conversation. Cooper (1982), interested

in applying Grice to the theories of written composition, claims that Grice advocates co-operation because

"*What enables conversation to proceed is an underlying assumption that we as conversant have purposes for conversing and that we recognize that these purposes are more likely to be fulfilled if we co-operate."(1982:112)*[3]

Dr. Nozer Niazi's 'Novel and Interpretation' (2004), Dr. Ashok Thorat's 'A Discourse Analysis of Five Indian Novels' Dr. Sagar Waghmare's Gricean Approach To Harold Pinter's Plays (2014) are seminal studies in the pragmatic analysis of selected plays. The present research owes a great debt to these books for an insightful analysis of all the applications and strategies of Co-operative Principle in the selected plays.

After this review, it seems that there is hardly a research work which studies The Gricean Maxims the context of Samuel Beckett's selected plays.

4. AIMS AND OBECTIVES

I) To discuss in detail the H P Grice's Co-operative Principle, its maxims, their violation and observance.

II) To bring out the significance of the Co-operative Principle as a theory of language use.

III) To study how the notion of Co-operative Principle provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean more than what is actually communicated by the characters through absurd communicative activities in Beckett's plays.

IV) To probe some of the possible properties of the Co-operative Principle.

V) To devise the analytical models to interpret the Co-operative Principle in various speech events occurring in Beckett's selected plays.

VI) To trace out pedagogical implications of Co-operative Principle in rendering absurd drama more comprehensively.

5. HYPOTHESIS

It is general supposition that language in Beckett's plays has been often reduced to meaningless utterance at the extreme point of its use. The Co-operative Principle applied to Beckett's selected plays may prove that it is possible to mean more than what is actually communicated by the characters through the absurd communicative activities.

6. JUSTIFICATION

Beckett's style is most distinctive and he uses the language in two ways – language as a medium of evasion and language as a medium of expression. Therefore, Grice's the Co-operative Principle, its maxims, their violation and observance may be helpful to arrive at the exact message, especially the hidden agenda of the meaning conveyed through the absurd communicative activities. Application of Co-operative Principle to absurd communicative activities may prove that absurd plays are much more meaningful at the deeper contextual level. There is hardly a research work which studies the application of Gricean Maxims in the context of Beckett's plays.

7. SCOPE AND LIMTATIONS

The scope for the application of Grice's the Co-operative Principle, its maxims with their observance and violation, in any work of art is exhaustible. Where there is a talk exchange or communication among the characters, there we

can apply the theory of the Co-operative Principle. Therefore, research can be carried out about how communication takes place between two or more persons in real life or in any work of art by applying the Co-operative Principle.

However, the scope of this study is limited to the analysis of the Gricean Maxims in Samuel Beckett's selected plays i.e. *Waiting for Godot and The Endgame*. The analysis of these plays will deal with the maxims of Co-operative Principle. They are, The Maxim of Quality, The Maxim of Quantity, The Maxim of Relevance and The Maxim of Manner. These maxims will be analyzed with their observance and violation in the context.

It has been made clear with justification that the study is restricted to the analysis of one author and his selected plays. Hence, it does not provide a comparative study with other absurd writers or plays.

8. METHODOLOGY

The present study will adopt the following methodology. After a brief discussion about The Co-operative Principle the researcher will develop a kind of theoretical framework. The analytical model will comprise of maxims of Grice's the Co-operative Principle such as The Maxim of Quality, The Maxim of Quantity, The Maxim of Relevance and The Maxim of Manner.

A workable model to be applied to Beckett's selected plays will be deployed on the basis of Grice's theory of The Co-operative Principle. Varieties of passages will be selected for analysis which will be preceded by a brief introduction and followed by a conclusion.

9. PROPOSED CHAPTER SCHEME

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will deal with introduction, hypothesis, data, review of literature, aims and objectives and methodology. It will comment on Beckett as an absurd playwright. In addition, it will focus on the significance and limitations of the study of Grice's The Co-operative Principle in the context of Beckett's selected plays.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will deal with Pragmatics as a prominent branch of Linguistics. It takes a review of major concepts and terms in Pragmatics such as the Co-operative Principle and Politeness Principle, Speech Acts, Presupposition and Implicature etc. The chapter gives the idea about the Theatre of the Absurd and Samuel Beckett as an absurdist writer. It will comment on Samuel Beckett's use of language. It will also include a brief summary of the selected plays. In short, second chapter provides the background for the study. The second chapter mainly deals with the selection which aims at reviving Grice's contribution to the notion of The Co-operative Principle. Co-operative Principle has four maxims. They are,

1) The Maxim of Quality
2) The Maxim of Quantity
3) The Maxim of Relevance
4) The Maxim of Manner

The chapter will also describe the nature of the observance and violation of these four maxims.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS OF GRICEAN MAXIMS IN WAITING FOR GODOT

This chapter will be devoted to the application of the analytical model based on the Co-operative Principle with its observance and violation in conversational pieces from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. It will comprise of analytical model and a detailed analysis of the selected conversational pieces from the play.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF GRICEAN MAXIMS IN ENDGAME AND KRAPP'S LAST TAPE

This chapter will be devoted to the application of the analytical model based on the Co-operative Principle with its observance and violation in conversational pieces from Samuel Beckett's Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape. It will comprise of analytical model and a detailed analysis of the selected conversational pieces from the play.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS OF GRICEAN MAXIMS IN HAPPY DAYS

This chapter will be devoted to the application of the analytical model based on the Co-operative Principle with its observance and violation in conversational pieces from Samuel Beckett's Happy Days. It will comprise of analytical model and a detailed analysis of the selected conversational pieces from the play.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter will focus on the conclusions derived from the present study. It will also try to convey the importance of Grice's the Co-operative Principle as an authentic tool to provide some explicit account of the communicative activities in absurd plays. Finally, the chapter will make an effort to explain the pedagogical implications of the application of Gricean maxims and suggest further research work to be carried out in the context of the present research work.

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